



**For Immediate Release:**

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**Media Contact:**

Lois Bloebaum

Mgr., Maternal and Infant Health Pgm.

801-538-6792

## **News Release**

### **Utah Joins Contest to Help Moms and Babies**

*UDOH reaches out to new and expectant moms with 'text4baby' program*

Salt Lake City, UT -- In honor of Mother's Day and National Women's Health Week, the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) announced today its participation in the **text4baby** State Enrollment Contest, a national competition to enroll pregnant women and new mothers in the text4baby program.

Text4baby is the country's first free health education effort to reach women via text messaging. Pregnant women and new mothers who text "BABY" (or "BEBE" for Spanish) to 511411 will receive weekly texts with expert advice sent directly to their cell phone. The messages are timed to each woman's due date or her baby's birth date and will continue through the baby's first year of life. The information includes topics like nutrition, immunizations, and birth defect prevention.

The United States has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the industrialized world. Each year in Utah, more than 5,272 babies are born prematurely and 285 infants die before their first birthday (2009 data). In response to this national public health crisis, the national Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB) launched text4baby in partnership with founding sponsor Johnson & Johnson and others.

Launched in 2010, text4baby has already reached more than 160,000 women. The goal of the contest is to reach twice as many users through healthy competition among states. The states that have enrolled the most members between May 10 and October 20, 2011 will be announced at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting in Washington, DC.

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“Our Department is excited to join forces with the text4baby initiative,” said UDOH Executive Director Dr. David Patton. “Sending expectant and new moms health-related texts is simple and inexpensive, and enables us to reach tens of thousands of woman and directly impact their health and that of their babies,” he added.

Text4baby hopes to reach 1 million mothers by the end of 2012. “The contest gives Utah one more tool to help pregnant women and new moms get timely information they need to ensure their child’s healthy development,” said Julia Robertson, manager, UDOH Pregnancy Risk Line.

Text4baby messages were developed by health agencies like the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and March of Dimes. Other contest sponsors include the U.S. Department of Agriculture, WIC, the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP), and the National Association of County and State Health officials. For contest details, visit <http://health.utah.gov/mihp/>.

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*